

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 16-21 will remain in this application. Claims 1-15 were previously canceled. Entry of the Amendment and reconsideration of the application are requested.

The portion of the specification referred to by the Examiner in section 1 of the Office Action has been further revised. It is respectfully submitted that the newly presented objection to the specification should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a) is requested.

The instrument panel assembly forming the subject matter of U.S. Patent 4,559,868 to Nonaka et al. is installed as a pre-assembled unit into a motor vehicle. The assembly has a base panel 21 in the form of a W. At that base panel 21 are mounted a face panel 2, a top panel 6 and a back panel 22. The base panel 21 is provided with fitting recesses 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35, in which the edges of the face panel 2, the top panel 6 and the back panel 22 are inserted. Thereafter, these panels are fixed by respective pluralities of screws 43, 47, 51 and 52.

The pluralities of screws 43, 47, 51, and 52 are all arranged such that they are accessible only from the back of the instrument panel assembly. As a result, the instrument panel assembly has to be completely assembled before the whole

unit is mounted into a passenger vehicle and fixed to a member of the body of that vehicle.

In column 4, lines 53 to 55, and in Figure 3, the Nonaka et al. patent discloses that the back panel 22 of the instrument panel assembly is fixed to a rigid member, defining a firewall of the vehicle, by way of a plurality of bolts 54 and 55. Access to these bolts 54 and 55 is possible only from the motor compartment of the vehicle. The bolts 55 have to be fixed to the back panel 22 before that back panel is fixed to the base panel 21.

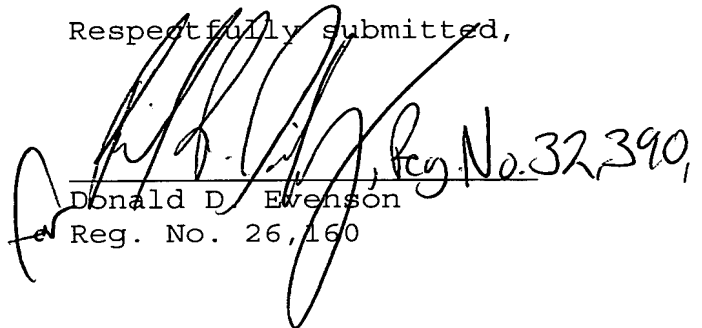
The present invention is distinguished from the Nonaka et al. instrument panel device, since the dashboard assembly of the present invention is not a pre-assembled unit which has to be mounted or dismounted as a unit. The dashboard assembly of the present invention has a housing part mounted to the vehicle body and a cover part which is detachably mounted on that housing part. This provides several advantages, and is especially advantageous since repairs or service operations in the interior of the dashboard are possible without removing the instrument panel as a whole out of the vehicle. In principle, such a dashboard assembly may have a problem in that, because of the inclination of windshield, it may be difficult to mount or dismount the cover part from the housing part. This problem is solved by the present invention, and the manner in which the problem is solved is reflected in claims 16 and 19 above.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 16 and 19 are patentable over the Nonaka et al. instrument panel device. Dependent claims 17, 18, 20, and 21 are patentable as well.

This application is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions after considering this Amendment, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP VERSION TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In each paragraph or claim appearing below, additions are underlined and deletions are bracketed.

Replacement for paragraphs 0002-0007:

--[0002] The present invention relates to a dashboard of a motor vehicle such as a passenger car. The dashboard comprises [an upper] a cover part which covers [installations] and [which] is fastened at least partially to the housing upper part of a heating and/or air conditioning system housing.

[0003] In prior art dashboards, ^{Cover?} upper parts can be attached to installations and front cross members only while windshields, which attach to the upper parts, have not yet been mounted. Once a windshield has been mounted, an upper part of a prior art dashboard can be disassembled only with considerable effort, if the windshield is not disassembled along with it. Therefore, any repairs to this upper part and installations covered by the upper part require considerable assembly work.

[0004] An object of the invention is to render assembly and disassembly of such an upper or cover part easier.

[0005] This object is achieved by providing [the installations and the] cover and housing upper [part] parts with meshing fastening [means] structure and recesses which are positioned toward the top corner relative to the interior of the motor vehicle and which can be fitted together in this direction.

[0006] In this way, the [upper] cover part can be mounted relatively late during vehicle manufacture, i.e., after installation of the windshield. Thus, it is easy to make a relatively late change in design during vehicle manufacture, since different [upper] cover part shape and color variations are not made until then. Subsequent disassembly and repair are readily possible by simply replacing the entire [upper] cover part. It is easy to preassemble a functional unit and then to fix the design by means of the [upper] cover part. The design can also be changed later.

[0007] The [upper] cover part of the invention is a multilayered plastic molded part, which includes a substrate comprising EPP (expanded polypropylene) foam and a sound absorbing layer. In this manner, [an upper] a cover part that absorbs sound in an especially advantageous manner is created. Hence, heating and air conditioning system noises and/or noises from other components are passed on only in a very reduced form into the interior of the vehicle.--

Amended claims 16 and 19:

16. (Twice amended) A passenger motor vehicle comprising:

a vehicle windshield,

a crossmember on which the vehicle windshield is mounted,

and

a vehicle dashboard assembly disposed behind the windshield in front of a vehicle passenger space,

said dashboard assembly including a housing part provided with fastening structure, and a cover part having slotted recesses therein for receiving the fastening structure when the cover part is installed in the vehicle,

wherein the fastening structure and the recesses are inclined toward the vehicle passenger space, and

wherein the housing part is mounted to the vehicle body and the cover part is thereafter detachably fixed to the housing part.

19. (Twice amended) A method of making a passenger motor vehicle comprising:

mounting a vehicle windshield in a final position on a vehicle body,

mounting a housing part provided with fastening structure adjacent the vehicle windshield at a side of a vehicle passenger space facing the windshield, and

subsequently detachably connecting a cover part of a vehicle dashboard to the fastening structure,

wherein the cover part is provided with slotted recesses therein for receiving the fastening structure when the cover part is installed in the vehicle, and

wherein the fastening structure and the recesses are inclined toward the vehicle passenger space.